

FALL 2024

The Catch

Cordova's Own Literary & Arts Journal



Stuff on the Window Sill // Oil painting by Susan Ogle

CURIOSITIES

Issue No. 14

To receive a **free** digital copy of *The Catch* each quarter, email: jillian.cordovapubliclibrary@gmail.com.

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All donations go to *Friends of the Library*.

Well, here we are again—yellow and crisp and quiet.

Let's all remember to be good to ourselves, and to each other,
as we move into the dark season.

As ever, **THANK YOU** to all of our contributing artists & writers,
and to a community that supports the arts!

See you in the Winter . . .

With Love & Gratitude,

Jillian Gold
Editor

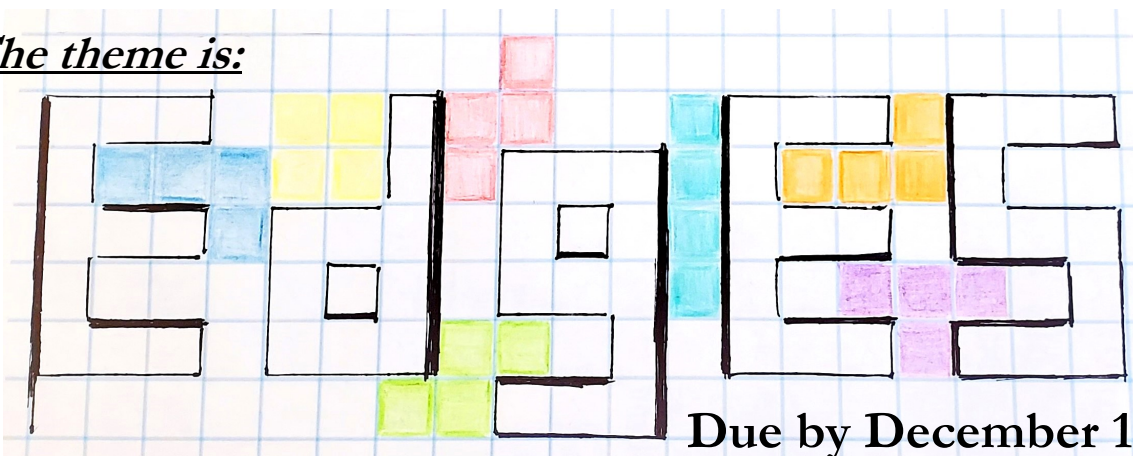


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The theme is:



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Title Lettering by Jillian Gold



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Mittens Baby

By Anna Hernandez

A light mist started yesterday morning,
by evening, the wind and rain increased.
Throughout the night, the storm blew in and took summer away.
Summer wasn't needed any longer.

Someone knew . . .

Someone knew our Mittens Baby no longer needed that warm, mossy spot,
that the sun warmed all afternoon.
Our sweet and naughty tufted-head baby,
was padding vigorously but with grace to a place of perpetual summer.

Mittens Baby was love and is love.

She taught us all, what unconditional love meant.
No matter what she did, we couldn't help but pick her up minutes later,
and kiss her warm little head.
She guarded, cared for, and loved us fiercely.

We are eternally grateful she found her way to us
and that we got to experience all of her being, and we hope it will be so again.
Thank you, God, for Mittens Baby.
She was a little light that made our dreariest days glow.

We love Mittens Baby, and she loves us, forever.



Mittens Baby Hernandez-Fajardo

12/1/2009 - 8/7/2024

With us from the evening of 12/6/2010 until the evening of 8/7/2024.

She would have been 15 this coming December 1st.

No Masters

By Jillian Gold

so you've gone and taken it
haven't you
straight from my lap

and what should I care
that I've not yet broken up
parsed out in pieces
what was all yours anyway

like you
owe me
the prolonged attention
of small
bites



*Look at the Curiosity
that Appeared in our
Cabinet this Morning!*

By PPayne



Nacreous Clouds Two Weeks Before Sunrise // Oil on artboard by David Rosenthal

Wunderkammern: An Exhibition on Alois Jansen 1867-1894(?)

By Polly Keats



Oil painting by Mark Flanagan

Miniature, Jansen House, 1972—Plywood, clay, found materials—A recreation of the Jansens' house, made by architect Johannes Bauer prior to the redevelopment of the Friedrichstraße block. Figures represent the Jansen family home on a Sunday after church, from left to right: Alois, age 8, sitting at the kitchen table drawing with a charcoal crayon; his younger sister, Elise and mother, Irma working on a needlepoint; father, Nico, is removing his minister's robe in the entryway.

Here's something I learned from my stepbrother—there is a theory in biology that any functional biochemical system must be either roughly the size of a cell, or else an assemblage of subunits that are themselves roughly the size of a cell. The reasoning involves the rate at which molecules can diffuse unaided through water, which effectively limits how far apart two

components can be and still act in a coordinated fashion. Communication over longer distances must be either electrical, like the impulses that follow nerves into muscles, or else sloppy and prone to error, like appetite or fear.

Cells mattered to him so much, even in childhood. That's a strange thing to say, but it's true. I remember a time when I came back from college dragging a tediously political boyfriend, who gamely tried to entertain my then-nine-year-old stepbrother by making up little plays with his Dungeons and Dragons figurines. When my stepbrother said he liked the fighter class, my then-boyfriend got very serious and pointed out that chances were if we lived in medieval times, we wouldn't be fighters, we'd be peasants.

"No, stupid," said my stepbrother. "We'd be plankton."

(continues on next page)

Self-portrait in School Uniform, 1885—Oil on canvas—Jansen was identified at a young age as a brilliant artist and began study at the Imperial Academy when he was twelve. This is the earliest of his works known to survive and reflects an approach to portraiture typical of the era. Notable, however, is an oft-overlooked detail in the school scarf: disguised in the embroidery are the figures of several human hands, all caressing Jansen's face and shoulders. What appears to be a tear in the pocket of his coat can also be identified as a trompe-l'oeil mouse. Jansen never referred to these in writing, and indeed left this painting face down in a storeroom at the academy when he traveled to London in 1890.

My stepbrother studied crinoids, strange prehistoric invertebrates that barely survived the late Ordovician extinction 444 million years ago. Also known as *sea lilies*, crinoids consist of five arms atop a segmented stalk. Each colorful arm is divided and covered with little fingers and these, in turn, are covered with tiny hairs, and the overall impression is of a bouquet of peacock feathers splayed atop a chicken leg. The arms and fingers and hairs—pinnules and villi—act as filters, collecting drifting food from the current and conveying it, particle by particle, to the disc-like body at the top of the stalk, where a central mouth devours, digests, and then shits out whatever remains.

Herring-boat at Sea, 1890—Watercolor on paper, and accompanying diary page—In London, Jansen became fascinated with the works of J. M. W. Turner, particularly his landscapes and seascapes, and wrote in his diary of a desire to “peel back the wallpaper, so to speak, with which society covers the animate world.” Of this work, he wrote, “All good fishermen know the leviathan and mermaid, the devilfish and yet must pull their nets as if they cannot see these wonders. I will show this pain of unseeing.” *How many monsters can you find?*

“Consciousness,” announced my stepbrother, “is an emergent property of social behavior.” He was finishing his undergrad research and in the process of applying to graduate school, and distracting himself, we later found out, with Ritalin, weed, and long emails to his friends. This particular email was three pages, printed out; I still have it. In it, he explains his view that what we think of as the self is a narrative that takes experience and crams it into the mold-shape every human brain carries around for processing stories. This, he explained, is why folktales from all cultures are so similar—we are designed to understand “unified intentional protagonists and unified intentional antagonists” as well as the presence of supporting characters who fade into automaticity the further they are from the narrator or main character. These conventions are useful for regulating human interactions with other humans and, accidentally, humans apply them to their own sensory input as well. The result is “an identity that includes all the dead protein in our fingernails and the bacteria in our gut, but not our houses or our food crops.”

At this point we were all used to getting such treatises in our in-boxes. I was going through a particularly bad break-up at the time, and didn't ask him about this until after he was on medication. He explained that while watching a video of a crinoid walking, on its arms and dragging its stalk, up an underwater slope in the Bahamas, he had realized in a flash that all self-awareness is an illusion. He finished his notes, drafted and sent this email, and left the lab. His roommate found him at home three hours later, staring at an empty pill-bottle on the kitchen table.

(continues on next page)

Docklands with Trees (3), 1891—Watercolor on paper, and prints of derived works—With the 1891 exhibition of this series, Jansen finally felt he had brought his image of the animate world to the public. Here we see two landscapes overlaying each other: one a row of warehouses, wagons, ships, stevedores, and the commerce of East London; the other a wilderness of giant oaks, growing through and amongst the human elements of the painting. Jansen also considered titling the show *The Forest Is Always Present At Last*, and many people know it only by that name. Seen here also are album covers by the metal bands Serafin (1990) and Black Sigatoka (2004) that visually quote *Docklands*, as well as a 1978 magazine advertisement for PaineWebber & Co. stockbrokers.

The medication worked well for my stepbrother. After a brief hospitalization, he was able to return to his research project and, after a year of field work, entered a master's program in marine biology. He continued to write long and sometimes uncomfortably revelatory emails, but mostly they dealt with the daily routines of his research. He found a girlfriend—a delightfully odd geologist who took him backpacking in the Sierras and quietly notified me whenever he

tried to stop taking his meds again. He began to specialize in pre-Permian period oceanography. It turns out that the chicken-leg segments that make up the stalks of crinoids fossilize very well, to the point that they were once collected as “St. Cuthbert’s Beads” in Northumberland. Which species of crinoid ossicle showed up in a particular sediment could tell a lot about the ocean conditions at the time the layer was formed and, with enough of this data, it is possible to build maps of a long-lost world.

And pre-Silurian crinoids were fascinating! Unlike the knee-high wisps of today, prehistoric crinoids could be hundreds of feet tall, with massive stalks and, presumably, enormous fans of feathery arms, sweeping helpless invertebrates and single-celled creatures inward towards their near-brainless mouths. Great ghostly forests of chicken-legs once walked across the muddy ocean floors following currents or light or some chemical signal we can’t imagine. In 2022, after a post-COVID visit to Sequoia National Park, my stepbrother wrote that he had spent the entire time in Grant’s Grove lying on his back imagining himself a larval eurypterid, sucked helplessly into the branches of an Ordovician forest, over and over, until he could find beauty in it.

(continues on next page)



Photograph by David Saiget

Harbor, Teeth, 1894—Oil on canvas, and accompanying diary page—Jansen quickly came to resent the success that followed *Docklands*, and the “New London Romantics” who coalesced around his idea of an animate world. This work, completed in 1894 but largely painted in 1893, shows Portsmouth on the south coast of England, with its harbor and characteristically dramatic sea. Notice the large, conical teeth on the rocky coast. Reminiscent of *Herring-boat*, the waves and clouds are again filled with creatures. But where the earlier work evinced wonder, these manifestations seem hostile or ominous. Indeed, as he completed the first study for this work, Jansen noted in his diary, “the new pretenders fail to see that if one opens oneself to the heart of the universe, one may discover the universe loves them not.”

Philosopher Eugene Thacker wrote that horror literature comes in two forms: the humanist and the anti-humanist. Roughly, these are horror fiction in which demons pursue you for your sins, and horror fiction in which you are simply too irrelevant and die as an afterthought of other processes. I know this because it was the subject of my stepbrother’s final emailed exegesis.

“The first form of horror, while frightening, is ultimately comforting,” he wrote, “because it conforms to the human mind’s story-mold of a unified intentional antagonist. Terrible, powerful entities care about us and have desires the way we do. The second form denies all meaning and intention whatsoever.” He continued with an explanation of *consciousness* as a balancing act between paranoia, which he described as “overfitting” the world into a story that doesn’t exist, and true anomie which, while scientifically accurate, is unbearable for the human mind. What I didn’t know, though I should have suspected it, is that his girlfriend had moved out, and he had stopped taking his medication again.

The research director called my mother first, and then she called me. There had been a deck watch. Nobody had seen him or heard a splash. A coast guard helicopter from San Diego had searched their backtrack but no body had ever surfaced. They couldn’t rule out an accident, though he had no particular reason to be on deck at night. The investigation was also concerned that he hadn’t left a note, which seemed like an idiotic thing to worry about. His writings and personal belongings were conveyed to his ex-girlfriend, in accordance with his wishes, and she generously shared them with the family, including the necklace of St. Cuthbert’s beads I wear as I write this today.

Rosa Marie [unfinished], 1894—Oil on canvas—Jansen’s final unfinished painting is, ironically, of the ship from which he vanished. This is considered his most religious work and, also, one of his most controversial—featuring conventional angels in the rigging and the clouds, which had never previously appeared in any Jansen design. In contrast to *Harbor* and other works of his late period, the overlaid entities of the ocean lack menace, and in the upper corner appear to be a number of mermaids or sirens, raising a carpet or other cloth. He left few diary notes that reference *Rosa Marie* and we have no indication what any of these figures represent. Martinson, one of the leading “New London Romantics”, wrote in 1895 that the cloth was to be a banner on which Jansen would write the secret truth of the universe. Indeed, in several of his late letters, Jansen spoke of the “revealed name of the incarnate.” But alas, we know not what this might mean.



Kali vs. Colonel // Acrylic paint markers by Alysha Cypher

Fighting Winter Yellow Leaves

By Greg Mans

I.

"Today you make me want to tie myself to a tree, stake my feel to earth herself so I can't get away."

—Jim Harrison, *Letters to Yessenin*.

And maybe finally rest.

I wonder what the trees reaching to sun or fish swimming steady in river current might say about fighting.

Three months after our father died, I found his words marking pages in a book by the fireplace talking of natural order and the way of things.

Now when I close my eyes, I dream of wolves killing weak and sick moose in deep winter snow.

I love those who choose not to fight and instead float the river.

We love others for the holes in our hearts.

II.

It's mid-October and raspberries still ripen giving me hope for more.

Rain has come and gone today, showing the briefest of sun through gray clouds.

I miss my father's answers just as he must have missed his father once he was gone.

What joy did he grasp when closing his eyes between breaths? In what pocket did he place his fears?

The privilege is in choice, answers coming when they do.

I take what I can, twisting the puzzle to fit pieces.

My dead hands care not to tear roots from frozen ground.



Photograph by David Saiget

Nan

By Jillian Gold

towards the end she could really turn it around

your ma goin' with anyone?

yeah, nan. she remarried.

it won't last.

well, that's not really a nice thing to say.

-- beat --

your ma goin' with anyone?

yeah, nan. she remarried.

oh, that's nice.

yeah.

it's hard to change
what prejudice calcifies

a vanishing this and now
is not without its own softness

the great unsettling
so much for one's ways

there are, though
species thriving
in disturbed soils

some will await a completely ashen slate
to finally populate



Self Portrait
Paint marker illustration by Alysha Cypher

THE TRILOGY

By Tina Eckley

Serpentine Lady is packing her personal belongings for a pilgrimage.
Twisted Sister peeks through the door crack with squinted jealous eyes.
Thor embraces them both—knowing their course will be lived differently,
yet vowing to help foster a mindset geared toward peace.



Eastern red cedar sculptures by Geo K Eckley

Twisted: Can I follow you?

Serpentine: Sure, keep in mind the path I'm taking requires courage.

Twisted: Maybe you could share some with me.

Serpentine: Not possible, as the journey will take all my strength.

Twisted: That's selfish.

Serpentine: No, that's honesty.

Twisted: Well, the great Thor can help me if you won't.

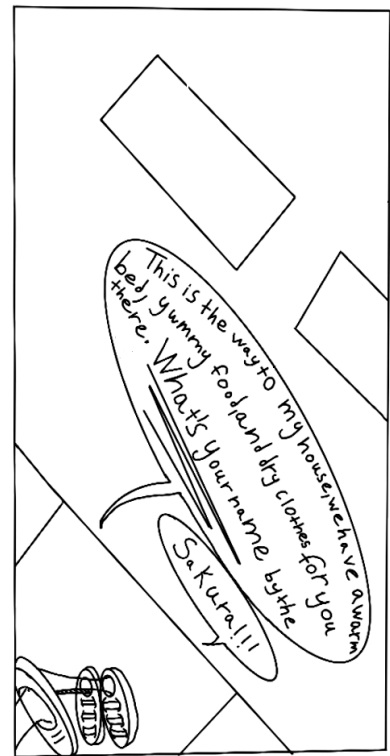
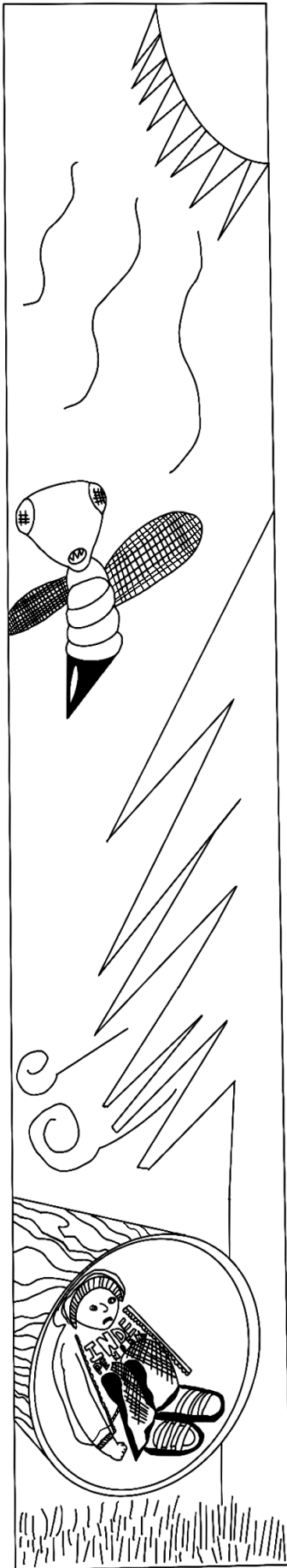
Serpentine: The journey is not about helping one another. It's to fulfill my *curious nature*.

Twisted: That is still selfish.

Serpentine: No, that's destiny.

Twisted: Fine, I'll stay and show you. Thor will give me what ever I need to stay warm and safe
while you roam hopelessly.

Serpentine: Ahhh, Twisted Sister, not all who wander are lost.





Photograph by Brian Varner

1900—Leadville

By Tina Yo-Ma

Seeking his fortune
In silver and gold,
Former Senator Gallagher
Does just what he's told.

He shoulders his pickaxe,
Climbs into the depth
Of Moyer Mine.

He enters a drift.
Flies through the air
Like a fast moving swift,
Two weeks into his
January shift.

It was an unexploded
Dynamite round,
That tossed him into the air
With a booming sound.

Superstitious miners claim
Gallagher's spirit roams
Dark, dank underground
Offering protection
From unseen death
Or destruction.

Hmmmmmm
Contemplation.
Perhaps it might have been better,
If Joseph Gallagher
Remained a senator.



Leadville, CO by Tina Yo-Ma

WUNDERLUST

By Nana Tina

I've been wondering about something . . .

What's that, sweet pea?

How many carrots do you need to make a cake? 4-5

Eggs? 3

What else?

Nutmeg, ginger, cloves & cinnamon – those are the tasty ingredients.

Yey—Don't forget the white frosting!

ACTS OF SERVICE

I've been wondering about something . . .

OK, what's up?

What does $2 + 2$ equal? = 4

$4 + 4$	$8 + 8$	$16 + 16$	$32 + 32$	$64 + 64$
8	16	32	64	128

$128 + 128$	$256 + 256$	$512 + 512$
256	512	1024

1024 & 1024
2048 *Congratulations—we just counted in binary.*

Yey—

LEARNING

I've been wondering about something . . .

Oh yeah, what's up?

How do I attach this wing part on the Transforming Lava Dragon?

Let's take a look.

Too hard.

Well, good work up to this point!

Yey—

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

(continues on next page)

I've been wondering about something . . .

What's that, bro?

How can we get into the zoo's underground tunnel?

You have to enter under the bridge.

Which bridge are you talking about?

Oh, I can help, follow my truck.

Yey—hey, wait up!

QUALITY TIME

I've been wondering about something . . .

What's up, son?

What part does my electric car need to run?

The wire connection on the battery got shorted.

Can we fix it? I promise no mud puddles.

Already ordered the part and I'll check the mail today.

Yey—

GIFTS

I've been wondering about something . . .

What's that, my love?

Do bears like honey or salmon better?

Depends, maybe both the same.

Do bears like blueberries or salmonberries better?

Depends, maybe both the same.

I'm going to leave some on this bush for them.

You are kind, give me a hug.

Yey—

PHYSICAL TOUCH



NIGHTINGALE

By Jeanie Gold

Retired now, for a stretch of time
and looking back . . .

For over 40 years, was immersed
in various avenues of nursing practice;
a humble profession that enriched my life
in countless ways, with many blessings.

Pursuing this vocation arose during high school,
an inner-calling of sorts.
The “why” of that remains somewhat mysterious.

Perhaps it came *with me* – from a prior life.

Perhaps my maternal grandmother
being a nurse was influential.

No doubt, my love of science and curiosity about
human body intricacies played a significant role.

Whatever the reasons,
when that calling came
I was certain of its rightness for me.

Early on, was captivated by the story
of Florence Nightingale, founder of modern nursing,
and how present-day nursing as a distinctive art
and distinctive profession launched its start.

Through the efforts of her father
Nightingale received an education
during the Victorian era
comparable to men of high financial means.

As a pioneer in statistical analysis
she reformed the field of public health,
yielding large scale sanitary and system reforms
and revolutionizing care of wounded soldiers in Crimea.

(continues on next page)

Rising to a position of prominence
in scientific and philosophical thought,
she established a spiritual foundation of nursing;
a guiding light throughout my career.

Nightingale viewed the universe as
the embodiment of a transcendent *Spirit*
and human beings and the natural world
as having underlying/indwelling divinity.

My life-long view of nursing as “sacred practice”
is directly due
to the influence of Florence Nightingale.

For this, I am ever grateful!



The Space Between // Pencil illustration by Shelly D Kocan

Big Will

In Memory of Will and Margie Tillion

By Steve Schoonmaker—F/V *Saulteur*



Steve's 1958 Chevrolet Apache Pickup // Photo by Steve Schoonmaker

Not so much measured in money,
Accreditation's degrees
More like satisfied answers
To what's asked in the breeze
To what's asked in myself
Yes, my real properties
In my muscular youth of the 1980's

Land's end met fresh bay
In its postcard of peaks
When its harbor was still small
A mostly still-small-boat fleet
Yes, and I was a young man
Of such simple means
As I sensed from inside
With this fisherman in me

Back when the beach fires were frequent
With all the hippies around
With all the driftwood-housed Spit Rats
Before the Icicle plant burned down

But that's another story
I'm just describing those scenes
Of such simple means
When life was my living room
When my life was a dream

I drove off the "Trusty Tusty"
Our mighty state ferry
With my brown Chevy pickup
A 1958 Apache
Up the Compass Rose from Kodiak
With this fisherman in me

Guess I drove into Homer
At the request of the stars
And parked at the bar, quite
Conspicuously, so an old friend
Might see . . . That I was at Alice's
With this fisherman in me

(continues on next page)

That's when Janet came in
Cuz she just happened to see
My old '58 pickup, as she came down the street
There a Togiak seine job she landed for me
And returning to Homer, their skiffman to be
With Janet and Alray on the Moccasin team
Steel 32, maybe 9 foot in beam
Everything then of such simple means
Reflected in bays so wild mountain green
Seining Kamishak
Seining Kachemak, that was the scene

It was hand-pursed, and Snag Skiffs
Cassette tapes, in those days
When deck speakers spoke George Thorogood
To our grinding away, sang "Move it on Over"
To the bay's stormy clean
To the sea birds and brown bears
Where the beaches meet streams
Sang with the squeal of the seine winch
As our money bags leaned
Flopping and splashing
To the gulls eagerly
That's when I met Will, in that time
Like a dream, an old friend of Alray's
Who introduced him to me
Somewhere around July '83

Will Tillion of the Halibut Cove Clan
Was a strong, always kindly, often
Seldom seen man, who wore quietly
His obvious intelligence under
Wire rim glasses, cap, and slightly long
Brown hair, in his old wool Halibut jacket

Sleeves cut off, just above oversized
Forearms and hands standing broadly
In big rubber boots, when Big Will
Chuckled, I saw a fisherman
Classic without chrome

Will took me with crew on a trip out West
For a 72-hour halibut opener
At some mandatory unmentionable location
Where there were wooden white schooners
And fish, loading Will and Margie's
Green 44ft fiberglass boat, Old Squaw

Somewhere around 58 hours into that opening
I dozed off on the stool coiling ground line
Will was right beside me at the rail
He grabbed my nodding head, looked at me
And said, "So . . .
. . . So, you still want to be a fisherman?"

That fall, Will and Margie moved to Nuka Island
And set up home with their two boys
In historic Herring Pete's old house,
At the back of Home Cove,
Margie and the boys were often left
There alone, while Will and I fished
For Tanner Crab in the surrounding
Outer District.

Where the moody Gulf storms
And the moody Gulf rains
So many inches in a day
When it's too rough for any delivery to pay

(continues on next page)

It's safety over debt
So at Home Cove we slept, as the rain
On the Sea got down to a depth
It intaked in the hold of the tanked
Crabs we'd kept, so we took the crabs out
Put 'em back into pots, then back over the side
Just trying to keep 'em alive, only to watch
The sea otters dive, into those plugged
Pots . . . and feast, and Big Will says to me,
"So . . . So, you still want to be a fisherman?"

Off of Wild Yalik Point,
We were just one lone boat
With all of the arms of Nuka . . . one time
Will and I were setting gear at night . . .
Longlining conical pots, Will was driving
From the flying bridge, I was dancing
On deck with the gear,
Coil . . . Pot . . . Coil . . . Pot . . .
Coil . . . Pot, then out goes the anchor, line
And buoy —

That's when I noticed my gloved hands
Sparkling Sea's phosphorescence
As the propwash off the stern hurled
Phosphorescent fireballs into calm Beauty Bay
Which was reflecting the sky
Dancing crazy in green Northern Lights
As Will yells from the bridge
Out to me, "So . . .
. . . So, you still want to be a fisherman?"
That's what framed the whole game

Not so much measured in money,
Accreditation's degrees
More like satisfied answers
Once asked in the breeze
Yes, of real properties
Come what may, come what may

Like when Big Will just said, "So . . ."
I knew what he would say,
"So, you still want to be a fisherman?"

Which refrains to this day.



Crab fishing with Big Will at Nuka Island on the Old Squaw // Photo by Steve Schoonmaker



Photographs by Nelly Hand, who shot a roll of expired film out of curiosity.



“It’s a helluva thing, ain’t it? Boat in a tree. Helluva thing.”

—Jeff Nichols, *Mud*.

where did he go

my *To Kill a Mockingbird* Peck

my rock-flipper-over salamander guide

charcoal-gray migrated to a darker corner

black leather shoes, black leather belt, starched white shirts, one-color ties

she chose now

appalachian sunrise

my whistling-a-tune rod-slung-over-his-shoulder Sheriff Andy

my spade-in-wet-loam digging-worms teacher

new friends (godfather out of the scene)

a long time since shotgun smoke, pheasant tails, fishing pals

strayed west for bigger trout while he stayed back to dinner-party-talk-small

square shoulders rounded in colored sweaters

scratchy-warm whisker stubble gone to beard

g-man style black-rimmed glasses traded for professorial gray

fireflies blinked across a night July lawn

my cigar-boxes-filled-with-pinned-insects entomologist

my naming-flowers-as-we-walk-through-forests botanist

Helluva thing, a man’s wardrobe chosen for him

laid out on a bedroom armchair

yellow shirt, tan pants, white belt, paisley tie, yellow socks

unbalanced everything the way they matched

“I’m not a happy person” he confided

dead dreams of becoming a federal agent

easy to imagine

at the bottom of that graveled voice

my unrecognizable-in-two-toned-shoes Detective Friday

wondering then where I would go

my mockingbird rock, my stone-flipping crayfish catching guide

my man-in-a-necktie-riding-a-steed silent dreamer



Way Back in Red // Pastels by Steve Schoonmaker

Outliers

By Jillian Gold

I didn't hear the cranes yesterday

How solidly they occupied the sky

These past two weeks

In groups of roughly fifty

At every break in weather

Almost as if racing our calendars

Against the equinox

With their intimate knowing of light and shadow

And tonight's full moon so fit for travel

But likely it guides them wherever they've gone to next

Away from our leaves now limp with yellow

And the muskeg, gently frosted, crunching underfoot

Where all the perfect cranberries alight to remind

That it's all so delicious and tart

And in-reach, then fleeting

The harvest moon itself looks close enough to grab

Some storybook egg glowing orange

So often this month my thoughts have gone to the graveyard

As the late mushrooms parade in their elegant dress

And how many bodies have nourished that earth

Where I see one regal bolete

And touch its smooth top

Feel its spongy belly

Not too saturated at all

Even as late as it is

Tombstone gone crooked all fenced in gap teeth

And one perfect king who I leave just there

So much beauty in this life

And the next

I like to lay sometimes

In Olga's plot

. . . and Gertrude's

(continues on next page)

Olga lived a short life
Like so many people of the late 1800s
But Gertrude went deep into her 90s
A marvel always, but especially then
And room in her plot enough for two!
Something about the concrete frames
Recessed into soft earth
Moss's total reclamation
Invites me, "lay down." – And I do.
Such deep comfort
Held there in that soft, stillness
I'm a grateful visitor
And we all long for touch

Did you know that there's a discreet cemetery behind the school—?
I only recently learned this.
And raced there for all the local lore
Of the exclusive remains of working girls—(which historians later disputed)
There are two headstones left
And I think about Lora & Elizabeth
Their stories and lives
The other names, now lost, in their company
I wonder, too, about the plots of the men who've paid for a woman's touch
Maybe with markers boasting "loving husband," "loving father"
Not among the outliers and "loving whores"

Too quickly we pin one trade against another
All of us chasing food and warmth
By any means
And how much time and place dictate such roles

I keep hearing phantom Sandhills
Getting up from my seat to check

But there's lots of room to imagine
In the quiet of a town
Where all the hustle and roar of industry
Has finally laid to rest.

A Mood of Distinction

By Steve Schoonmaker—*F/V Saulteur*

I look to horizons
and what do I see
a mood of distinction
stirring in me

One step
then another
with the aid of the breeze
hinting directions
where destiny leads
aiding a confidence
of how it will be
a mood of distinction
stirring in me

Intuitively wearing
the Soul of my shoes
avoiding the logic
of what I should choose
not just chasing the bills
that always comes due
Intuitively open
even wounded
I'm free
I look to horizons
and what do I see
a mood of distinction
stirring in me

If sometimes a heartbreak
my heart
is still free
If sometimes a breakdown
the fix is in me
What's outside myself
however it be
Licking with tastebuds
for Soul's ecstasy
I look to horizons
and what do I see
a mood of distinction
stirring in me

Intuitively open
even wounded
I'm free
Licking with tastebuds
for Soul's ecstasy
hinting directions
where destiny leads
aiding a confidence
in how it will be
a mood of distinction
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Licking with tastebuds
for Soul's ecstasy
I look to horizons and what do I see
a mood of distinction
stirring in me





Pacific // Graphite illustration by Shelly D Kocan

Trinket or Bauble by Mike Towle

A few years back, I was running on one of our remote beaches and collecting “beach treasures” to bring home to my children. To occupy my thoughts as I ran, I busied myself trying to classify the items I found as either a **bauble** or a **trinket** (*I didn't have internet and hence could not just “google” the definitions*). When I saw this Fall's theme of *the Catch*, I figured I'd gather photos of the beach treasures people have found on our Alaska coastline and pose this same question to you readers in this ~~exciting silly fun controversial useless~~ original game of “Trinket or Bauble”.

The answers can be found on the bottom of the next page.

In the spirit of the game, please do not google the definitions before you take the quiz.



11" Glass Ball

(found in 1982)

Finder: Tom Kohler

Location: A Blur

☐ Trinket ☐ Bauble



Sun Bleached Tennis Ball

(unopened, but not for sale)

Finder: Brandt Meixell

Location: Kayak Island

☐ Trinket ☐ Bauble



Light Up Ball

(still works)

Finder: Diana Riedel

Location: Boswell Bay

☐ Trinket ☐ Bauble



Message in a Bottle

(written by Yakutat Brothers circa 1970)

Finder: Joan Songer

Location: Okalee Spit

☐ Trinket ☐ Bauble



Japanese Glass Rolling Pin

(found 2023, still works)

Finder: Jason Davis

Location: Little Softuk

☐ Trinket ☐ Bauble



Giant Buoy

(purportedly still floats)

Finder: Jason Lee and Travis Kindred

Location: North End Kayak Island

☐ Trinket ☐ Bauble

(continues on next page)



Unknown Boat Part

(made of marble)

Finder: Linda Ecolano

Location: Alice Cove, PWS

(bonus point if you know what this is)

☐ Trinket ☐ Bauble



Mermaid Purse

(hatched skate egg case, no longer works)

Finder: Michael Towle III

Location: Green Island, PWS

☐ Trinket ☐ Bauble



Japanese Bottles with Map

(found circa 1970)

Finder: Kathy Crow

Location: outer beach Hitchinbrook
or Beach River Montague

☐ Trinket ☐ Bauble



Whale Bones

(????)

Finder: Anonymous

Location: Redacted

☐ Trinket ☐ Bauble



Sinister Wooden Duck Head

(Cursed?)

Finder: Nelly Widmann

Location: Island by Foul Bay

☐ Trinket ☐ Bauble



Ceramic Die

(found alongside items from 1863)

Finder: Brian Wildrick

Location: "buried in my backyard"

☐ Trinket ☐ Bauble

Answers: So, I finally got around to "googling" the actual definition of *trinket* and *bauble*. As it turns out, they are pretty much synonyms and this game was a complete waste of our time. Hopefully you had fun looking at the neat beach treasures your neighbors have scored and avoided arguments or heated disputes over what the heck a bauble is anyway. My apologies to Jason Lee who had to indulge me in hours of debate on this very issue whilst we whiled away portions of our lives on these treasure-laden beaches with no phone service. Next time I'll just keep my musings to myself. But hey, isn't the world a little more interesting when curiosities remain, well, curious? Thanks for spoiling the fun, google!

Mystery

By Samuel Stripes

There's something out the door
it's everywhere you go
it's the reason green is green
the reason trees grow

but still to the eyes it remains a mystery

There's something, can you hear? It's far coming near
Thundering, sloshing, an elephant guffawing
but the ears cannot tell
even if they had mouths

to the books writing history it remains a mystery

There is something that you'll smell until you know it quite well
but words are just words and they'll change over time
someday an oak might smell like a pine
though senses are disturbed, displaced by too many years

to our noses it remains, ever the mystery

There is something that you taste and it's bitter on the tongue
the taste is so rotten it can't be forgotten
but it also makes you forget and long to remember
all the sunny days before next November

to the ever craving tongue it must remain a mystery

Sure there's one more sense and we know it quite well
but why it comes or goes is quite hard to tell
from pricking of sleeping feet and hair standing on end
using that nearly 6th sense to know what's 'round the bend
our great sense to feel to share a friend's hug
or that dastardly annoyance all covered in bugs
we feel what is coming from more than what's been
human cycles repeat again and again

The mystery reveals on the atomic scales
down by DNA roots electrons tell tales
the mysteries revealed this this and that that
mercury dyes in the mad hatter's hat

(continues on next page)

the closer we grow to all mysteries around
while nibbling on plants which grow from the ground
less mystery of empire rises and falls
making one wonder how they grow at all

An army of fungus deep in the ground
feeding the forest that grows all around
an army of birds dividing the sky
teaches migration, not confusing why
an army of raindrops forms in a cloud
descended from ice crystals getting too loud

Deities of old protect mysteries told
you can worship the sky and be one with the cold
some look around and see only what's to gain
but some aren't afraid for the mystery to remain



Photograph by David Lynn Grimes

UnAfraid

By Greg Mans

You did not fear as you reached toward sun patient for a turn that might never come.

Year after year you gave way to Leaf.

Never thinking.

I watch you now, broken and laying on the forest floor,

Unafraid

Never mind

Making dirt.



Photograph by Brian Varner

INVISIBLE ME

By Jeanie Gold

Cloaked beneath garment
of body-mind;
hidden beneath personality

and ego's design.

Unknowable by intellect;
imperceivable by
everyday eyes and ears

and thought.

Yet always present,
silently beckoning
from that innermost place
deep inside.

Unknown throughout most
or even all of a lifetime,
its ever-shining light and
calm, peaceful presence abide,

though not easily uncovered.

Well beyond body awareness
and restless thoughts,
in deepest quiet-stillness,
slowly, gradually over time

a veil lifts, in fleeting encounter

revealing a transient glimpse,
a silent whispering hush
of *Something* indescribable.

And in that momentary experience,
eternal, indwelling, invisible *Me*
drops its cover of opacity ...

and I am Home.

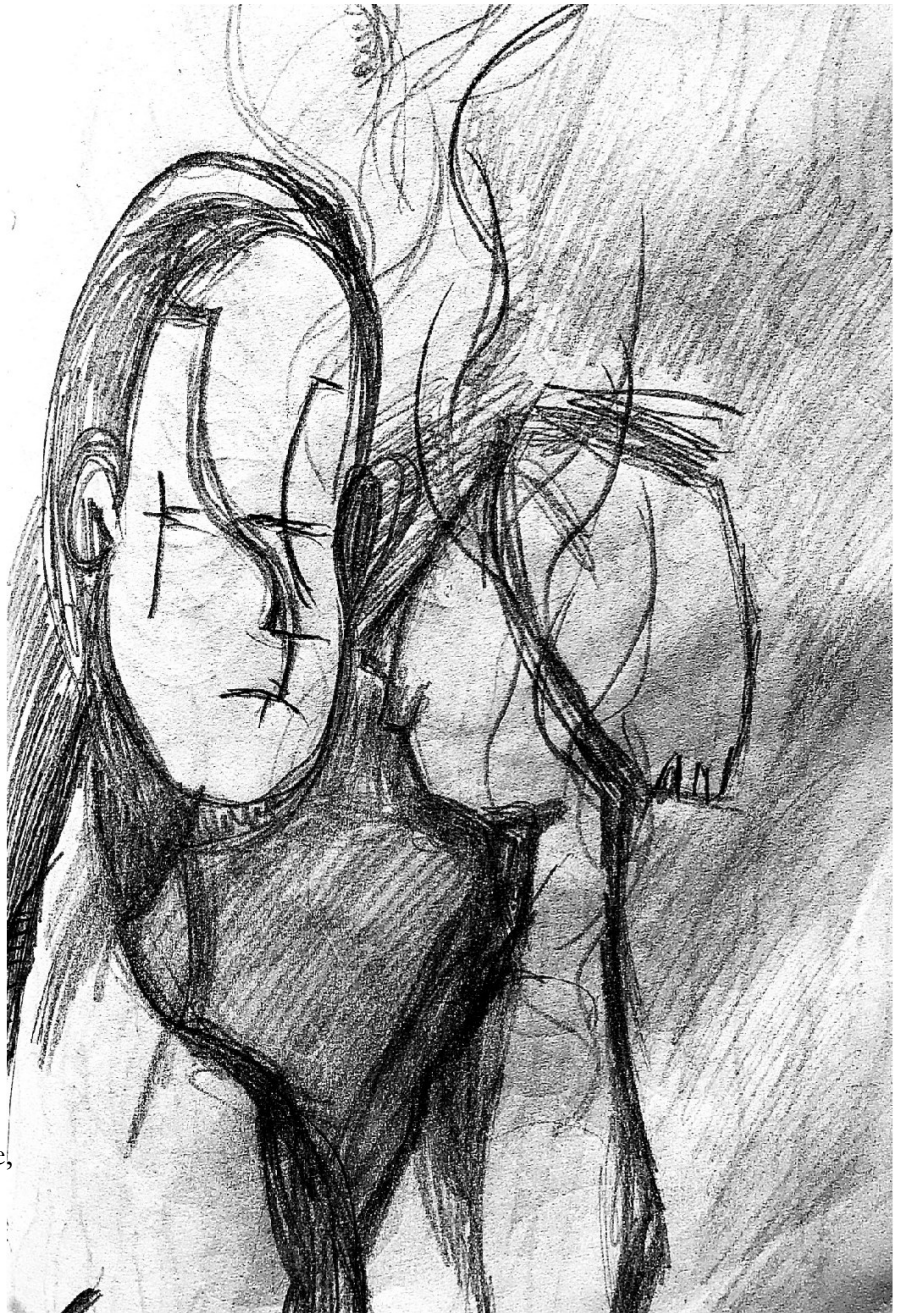


Illustration by Sergei Bogatchev



Photograph by David Saiget